

WORSHIP SERVICE NOTATIONS

Table of Contents

CHURCH YEAR NOTES

Advent	3
Christmas	5
Epiphany.....	6
Lent	7
Triduum.....	8
Ascension	11
Pentecost	12
Reformation	14
End Times.....	16

HYMN NOTES

Hymns from Christian Worship Hymnal/Supplement	17
Liturgical Hymns.....	22
General Hymns.....	23

WORSHIP NOTES

Communion, Morning Praise, Prayer of the Day, Paschal Candle, Lord’s Prayer	25
Luther’s Evening Prayer, Affirmation of Baptism, Compline	26

SPECIAL SERVICES NOTES

Confirmation, Mission, Church Founding/Anniversary.....	27
Augsburg Confession.....	28

COPYRIGHT DISCLAIMER

These notations were taken from various copyrighted sources and are not annotated for publication purposes.

Some of these sources include:

- CW Handbook
- Hymnary.com
- WELS C13

For educational use only.

Advent Season

SERVICE NOTES — ADVENT

Advent is a Latin word that means “coming.” The season of Advent is the four week period before Christmas that the Church uses to remember the “coming” of the Christ. We celebrate that he came once as a baby in Bethlehem, and that he will come again at the end of time.

The image on the next page depicts the Annunciation, or the moment when the Angel Gabriel announced to Mary that Jesus would be born of her. Above kneeling Mary, is the dove, a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Gabriel said, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”

May God bless your worship.

SERVICE NOTES

The Season: Advent means “coming.” This is the season of the Church Year when we remember that Christ will come again. He came once as a baby in Bethlehem and will return as King of kings and Lord of lords. The emphasis of the season is on preparation and watchfulness. The expectancy of Advent is fulfilled on Christmas.

The Service: Compline (kom’ plin) is an ancient rite of the Church. For centuries, compline was the final service of the day before one retires for the night. The congregation gathers in silence and meditation. Preservice music is omitted and the lighting is subdued to foster contemplation. This is a time for prayer and meditation. The believer finds peace in God’s forgiveness and security under the shadow of his wings.

The Candles: The candles symbolize Christ who is the light of the world. We pass the light of the candles just as we pass the light of Christ to others through the preaching of the Gospel. When the candles are all placed together on the altar they serve as the focal point of the service.

ADVENT WREATH

The Advent Wreath is a combination of two very common symbols: light and the fir tree. From the early centuries of Christianity it has been the practice to represent Christ by a burning candle. The fir tree has a long history of religious use. No doubt the Advent Wreath was suggested by the Christmas tree.

It seems that the Advent Wreath originated a few hundred years ago among the Lutherans of eastern Germany. A wreath of evergreens, made in various sizes, was either suspended from the ceiling or placed on a table. Four candles representing the four Sundays of Advent were fastened to the wreath.

Eventually the use of the Advent Wreath became wide spread and moved also from the home into the church. The general symbolism of the Advent Wreath lies in the growing light of the wreath, increasing each week as we approach the birthday of Jesus, the Light of the world.

THE GREAT O ANTIPHONS OF ADVENT

The Great O Antiphons of Advent have been cherished for centuries by Christian worshipers. Each one consists of a title given to Christ in the Old Testament and a petition asking him to come and fulfill the Scriptural promise or prophecy. An “antiphon” is a verse that is sung responsively. These Great Antiphons have been sung in Christian Churches since about 500 AD.

THE GREAT O ANTIPHONS OF ADVENT

For at least 1300 years the Church has sung the Great O Antiphons of Advent beginning on December 17 and culminating before Christmas Eve. Each antiphon sings of an Old Testament title of the Messiah and calls on Christ to come and fulfill his work. The familiar hymn by John Neale, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, is an adaptation of the O Antiphons.

The seven antiphons are:

O Sapientia (Wisdom)

O Adonai (Lord)

O Radix Jesse (Root of Jesse)

O Clavis David (Key of David)

O Oriens (Dayspring)

O Rex Gentium (King of the nations)

O Emmanuel (God-with-us)

The first letter of each antiphon, read backwards, spells ero cras, “Tomorrow I will be/come.”

Christmas

A FESTIVAL OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

SERVICE NOTES

For over a thousand years the Christian world has marked the passing of time from the year of Jesus' birth. Recognizing his coming into the world as the central event in the story of humankind, Christians count the years before his birth as B.C. (Before Christ) and the years after his birth as A.D. (*Anno Domini*, in the Year of Our Lord).

Our worship this morning is an adaptation of "The Festival of Lessons and Carols" service traditionally held at King's College, Cambridge, England, on December 24th every year. The Festival was first held on Christmas Eve, 1918. It was planned by Eric Milner-White, who at the age of thirty-four had just been appointed Dean of King's College after experience as an army chaplain. A revision of the Order of Service was made in 1919, involving rearrangement of the lessons. In almost every year some carols have been changed and some new ones introduced by successive organists. However, the backbone of the service, the lessons and the prayers, has remained virtually unchanged for nearly 100 years.

Epiphany

THE FESTIVAL OF THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD

SERVICE NOTES:

Today we celebrate the Festival of Epiphany of Our Lord. Epiphany is Christendom's second oldest festival; it has been celebrated continuously by the Church for nearly 1900 years.

The festival was originally a general celebration of the incarnation of Jesus Christ which included the commemoration of his birth, the visit of the Magi (Wise Men), all of Jesus' childhood events up to and including his baptism. Today, the Eastern Orthodox church celebrates Epiphany as the festival of Christ's birth, and the Western Church stresses the visit of the Magi.

The season of Epiphany (the Greek word for "appearance") celebrates God's revealing or manifesting of Jesus' identity as true God, Messiah, and Savior of the world. Epiphany not only commemorates the fact that Jesus appeared to save us, but that God revealed the identity of Jesus to the world.

The season of Epiphany will conclude on February 3, with the festival of the Transfiguration of our Lord.

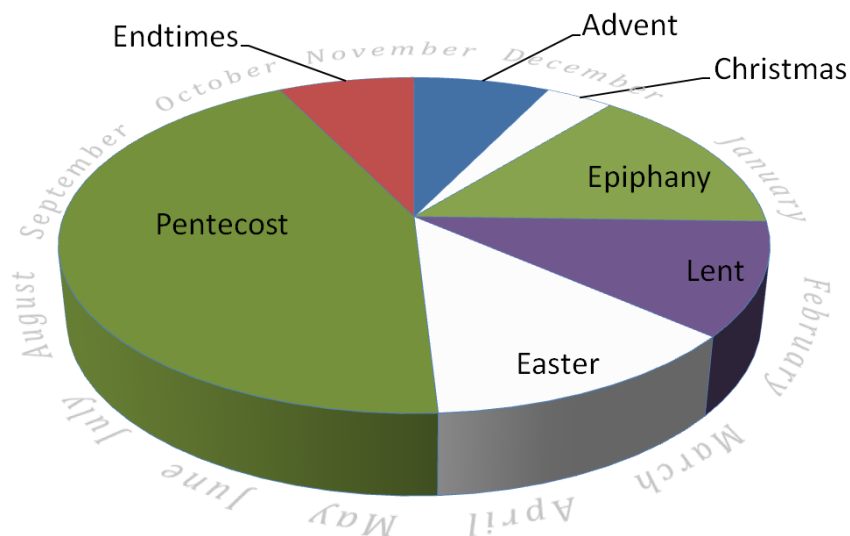
SERVICE NOTES: TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY

For more than 500 years, the Church has celebrated the Sunday known as the Festival of the Transfiguration. The word "transfiguration" simply means "a change in appearance." It refers to the account in the Gospel lesson for today when Jesus shined forth in all his heavenly glory.

Jesus gave his disciples a glimpse of his glory, because the cross was coming. Jesus left that mountain and headed to Jerusalem where he would suffer, die, and rise again for all mankind.

Transfiguration Sunday signals the end of the season of Epiphany. When we next meet, it will be the season of Lent, a time of reflection on our Savior's suffering. So on this day, we say our last Alleluias until the Day of Resurrection.

The Church Year



Lent

SERVICE NOTES: LENT

The word Lent comes from an Old English word for spring (“lengthen,” the time of the year when the days grow longer). For the last 1700 years, the Church has set aside the 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Easter as a time of special preparation. It is a time of repentance and renewal.

During Lent, our rejoicing is muted as we remember our Lord’s suffering and death. But it is with a purpose: we know that the Lord who died took up his life again on Easter Sunday morning. So our 40 days of Lent are ones lived in the certain hope of the resurrection.

The color of the season is purple. Purple is the ancient color of royalty. We have this kind of king: he wore a crown of thorns, and carried a cross for us. Thanks be to God!

For the precise counters in the congregation, the Church speaks of 40 days of Lent because they did not count the Sundays, which retained their significance as “little Easters.”

PALM SUNDAY

HOSANNA!

The word “hosanna” is a Hebrew word that means “Lord, save us!” The crowds cried, “Hosanna!” at Jesus entrance into Jerusalem, and it is still the cry of Christians today.

The Lord has saved us! Hosanna!

Triduum

CONTENTS

The Three Holy Days (*Triduum*) are celebrated by the Church on Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday. The *Triduum* is really one service, with three parts. At conclusion of each part, the congregation leaves and reassembles the next night for the following part of the Service of the Three Holy Days. This service folder will be your guide for worship during the next three days.

SERVICE NOTES FOR MAUNDY THURSDAY

The Day: Just as Ash Wednesday begins Lent, so Maundy Thursday marks the end of Lent proper and the beginning of the Three Holy Days of Christendom (the *Triduum*). The theme of the celebration is the Lord's new command (*mandatus*, Latin, became *Maundy* in Old English) to his disciples of all time to love each other as he has loved. The institution of the Lord's Supper sets forth the depth of Jesus' love and gives power to the church to live out his command. As with Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday occupies a unique place in the church calendar. It is a festival in which reconciliation is solemnly expressed and in which the congregation makes its transition from preparation for the celebration of the mystery of the Passion and Resurrection, to the celebration itself.

The Stripping of the Altar: The post-communion action of stripping the altar has its roots in the early Church. The congregation sings a hymn as the communion vessels, cross, and candles are carried from the chancel. Once the communion vessels and appointments are removed, the altar, which represents the body of Christ, becomes the focus. The altar is solemnly stripped of its vestments in token of the abandonment of Jesus in Gethsemane. The altar is left completely bare for Good Friday.

The Dismissal: The service concludes after the stripping of the altar. There is no closing blessing or closing hymn. Rather, the services of the Three Days flow into one another, as the congregation leaves to reassemble tomorrow for Part II: Good Friday, for our service of Tenebrae. Dismiss yourself when you are finished with your prayers and meditation.

THE STRIPPING OF THE ALTAR

While the congregation sings the hymn, the altar is solemnly stripped of its vestments and appointments in token of Jesus' abandonment and in preparation for Good Friday.

Part I of the Three Holy Days comes to a close, and the congregation leaves to assemble again for Part II: Good Friday. When you have finished your time of prayer and meditation, please dismiss yourself.

SERVICE NOTES FOR TENEBRAE

The Day: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter commemorate the central events of the Christian Church. Good Friday is the solemn celebration of the Lord's suffering and death on the cross. Our remembrance of Jesus' death, while solemn, is not a message of gloom, but a service of adoration of the Son of God as he gives up his life. We gather here today to celebrate the sacrifice of the cross. So we remember his passion, but do so with a triumphant note—for we know that in his resurrection Christ has conquered sin, death, and the devil.

The Service: Tenebræ (ten' eh bray) is an ancient rite of the Church. The Latin word "tenebræ" means "darkness." During this service the candles will be extinguished and lights will be progressively dimmed. In this we remember that God the Father cloaked the land with darkness during the death of his Son (Mt 27:45).

This service is a time for prayerful meditation. There is no preservice music. The altar remains stripped bare. There are moments of extended silence for meditation on the magnitude of Christ's sacrificial love.

We will hear Christ's Seven Words spoken from the cross. After each reading a candle is extinguished. The seventh candle represents Christ. It is not extinguished, but carried from the chancel to his Father's side. Then is heard the *strepitus* (strep' ee toos), a loud noise that represents the rending of Christ's tomb. The seventh candle is returned to burn in the chancel, foreshadowing the joy that awaits us on Easter morning.

The Dismissal: The service concludes with the final song, *Lord, Let at Last Your Angels Come*, which J.S. Bach used to close his *St. John's Passion*. There is no closing blessing or closing hymn. The congregation may remain for prayer and meditation. The congregation will dismiss themselves and leave God's house **in silence**, to return and gather for the Easter Vigil.

*The congregation may remain for prayer and meditation until **they leave in darkness and in silence**.*

The congregation assembles again tomorrow for Part III: Easter Vigil.

EASTER VIGIL SERVICE NOTES

The Day: In the early church, the Saturday of Holy Week was called the “Great Sabbath.” It was a day of meditation, fasting, and reflection in preparation for Easter. The Easter Vigil has been celebrated regularly since the days of Constantine the Great (300 A.D.).

The Service: It is called a “vigil” because it is a service of watching and waiting, using prayer, Scripture, and hymns. It is composed of four parts: The service of light, the service of lessons, the service of baptism, and the service of Holy Communion.

The Vigil remembers the great Passover of God. On the night when the 10th plague, the plague of the firstborn, struck the land of Egypt, God promised to deliver all his people whose doors were marked by the blood of a Passover lamb. God’s judgment would pass over them.

Centuries later, God fulfilled that first Passover, with the sacrifice of the Lamb of God during the Passover feast. Now we are assured that because of the blood of that Lamb, God’s judgment passes over us.

Vigils remain popular services, but are often thought of in other ways. Christmas Eve services and New Year’s Eve services are modern-day vigils. Even Easter sunrise services have their roots in the historic service we observe tonight.

THE SERVICE OF LIGHT

The congregation assembles in the memorial garden in the twilight. All are given candles as they arrive. A new fire has been kindled.

THE SERVICE OF LESSONS

In the ancient church, the lessons served as the final instruction for new believers about to be baptized. In those days, the series of lessons extended all through the night until dawn the next day! Over time, the readings were reduced significantly. Tonight we will have four readings.

THE SERVICE OF HOLY BAPTISM

The paschal candle is a symbol of the resurrection of Christ. Lit during the Easter Vigil, it remains burning through the 50 days of Easter. Then it is lit at every baptism and every funeral as a reminder of Christ’s resurrection. The paschal candle is dipped in the water of the baptismal font as a sign of Christ’s death and resurrection, which gives baptism its power.

BLESSINGS

It is traditional to take home the candles from the Easter Vigil and use them on the table for Easter dinner and as long as they last during the fifty days of the great Easter feast.

Ascension

ASCENSION

Today we celebrate the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord. It is a day we remember when Christ returned in glory to rule all things for the good of his Church.

FESTIVAL OF THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

SERVICE NOTES

Forty days ago, the darkness of Lent was dispelled by the light of Easter. For forty days, the Church has cried, “Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!” But forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he departed from his disciples and was enthroned in glory in heaven. From heaven he rules all things as our Lord and King. Today we celebrate the day he ascended (“went up”) to glory. But he promised not to leave his disciples alone. He promised to send them the Holy Spirit. They waited ten more days, and then on the Festival of Pentecost (“fiftieth day”) they saw Jesus’ promise made good. Next Sunday, we will celebrate that 50th day, the day of Pentecost.

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Venerable Bede was an English monk who lived around 700 AD. Known as “the Teacher of the Middle Ages,” Bede’s best known contribution is the system of dating events by years before or after Christ. (B.C. and A.D.). Bede died in 735 A.D. on the Feast of the Ascension, and the words he spoke on his deathbed serve as the Prayer of the Day for the Festival of the Ascension of our Lord. The words themselves flow from the great ascension texts. The prayer sets the tone for the Sunday, beginning with a note of triumph and ending with a supplication for the Spirit and his work on Pentecost. Today we see that Christ rules all things for his Church.

Pentecost

THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT—THE DAY OF PENTECOST

SERVICE NOTE:

The Festival of Pentecost marks the close of the Easter Season. The word pentecost (literally means "50") was the Greek name for the Jewish Festival of Weeks which happened 50 days after the Passover. The Pentecost we celebrate today was the one that happened 50 days after Jesus died and rose again. On Pentecost, the ascended Lord Jesus fulfilled his promise to baptize his disciples with the Holy Spirit.

THE FESTIVAL OF THE HOLY TRINITY

Trinity: Today the Christian Church celebrates that we believe in a Triune God. Triune comes from the Latin Tri (three) and unus (one). Our God is triune because he tells us that he is three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but only one God.

Selected Portions of the

ATHANASIAN CREED

A Confession of Faith for Trinity Sunday

This creed is named after St. Athanasius, a staunch defender of the Christian faith in the fourth century. It was prepared to assist the Church in combating two errors that undermined Bible teaching. One error denied that God's Son and the Holy Spirit are of one being or Godhead with the Father. The other error denied that Jesus Christ is true God and true man in one person. The Athanasian Creed continues to serve the Christian Church as a standard of the truth. It declares that whoever rejects the doctrine of the Trinity and the doctrine of Christ is without saving faith.

The section of the Athanasian Creed included here is the portion that confesses the Bible's teaching about the Triune God. This portion serves as a very fitting confession of faith for Trinity Sunday. A translation of the entire text of the Athanasian Creed may be found on pages 132-133 in Christian Worship: A Lutheran Hymnal.

SERVICE NOTES: THE FESTIVAL OF ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

Michael is one of two angels that Bible names for us. The other is the great messenger of God's grace, Gabriel. Gabriel's job was to announce the remarkable works of God's salvation to the waiting world. Michael's job is different.

Michael is called the archangel, that is, the leader of the angels. The Bible says that he is in charge of the great army of angels that God uses to protect and care for us. This is the day we remember God's great love in giving us these amazing protectors, the angels.

Today we're celebrating the Festival of St. Michael and All Angels. For 1500 years the Christian Church has celebrated this festival near the autumnal equinox, the day of 12 hours of sunlight and 12 hours of darkness. As Christians watched the autumn nights grow longer and the days grow shorter, they were reminded of the struggle between good and evil—between the forces of light and the forces of darkness—between the angel armies of God and the demonic forces of Satan. And so, every year as autumn darkened into winter, the Church celebrated the Feast of the Archangel, and remembered that Michael and All the Angels fought on their side.

You see, angels are one of God's answers to our fears. God wants to give us the proper perspective as we go through this life. No matter what sounds we hear, or dilemmas we face, or tragedies we endure...God's message for us is: Don't be afraid, because we are not alone.

SERVICE NOTES: THE FESTIVAL OF ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

Were you ever afraid of the dark? I was. When I was a little boy, I was afraid of the dark because I couldn't see, and who knows what might be out there, lurking in your closet or under your bed...

As adults we still tend to fear things that we can't see. Though now, it's about perspective. As you lie in bed late at night, and you are woken by that strange noise in the house...you fear it, because you don't know if it's that precariously stacked pile of toys falling over, or an unexpected houseguest... Perspective makes all the difference, right?

Michael is one of two angels that Bible names for us. The other is the great messenger of God's grace, Gabriel. Gabriel's job was to announce the remarkable works of God's salvation to the waiting world. Michael's job is different.

Michael is called the archangel, that is, the leader of the angels. The Bible says that he is in charge of the great army of angels that God uses to protect and care for us. This is the day we remember God's great love in giving us these amazing protectors, the angels.

Today we're celebrating the Festival of St. Michael and All Angels. For 1500 years the Christian Church has celebrated this festival near the autumnal equinox, the day of 12 hours of sunlight and 12 hours of darkness. As Christians watched the autumn nights grow longer and the days grow shorter, they were reminded of the struggle between good and evil—between the forces of light and the forces of darkness—between the angel armies of God and the demonic forces of Satan. And so, every year as autumn darkened into winter, the Church celebrated the Feast of the Archangel, and remembered that Michael and All the Angels fought on their side.

You see, angels are one of God's answers to our fears. God wants to give us the proper perspective as we go through this life. No matter what sounds we hear, or dilemmas we face, or tragedies we endure...God's message for us is: Don't be afraid, because we are not alone.

Reformation

SERVICE NOTES:

Today we celebrate the Festival of the Reformation of the Church. What does that mean? It means that today we remember why we're called Lutherans.

The effect of the Lutheran Reformation of the Church on the history of the world can hardly be overstated. Quite simply, it caused one of the most profound sea-changes in history. In fact, when *US News and World Report* ranked the most important events of the last 1000 years, the Lutheran Reformation placed second, right behind Gutenberg's moveable type printing press. Now consider that for a minute... That means that they considered the Lutheran Reformation to be of greater significance than the discovery of the New World (number 3 on the list).

But why? And who was this Luther guy? He was a monk, a priest, a professor at a little university in Wittenberg, Germany. Why would a guy like that be listed at the third most influential person of the last 1000 years (*1000 Years and 1000 People*, Gottlieb and Bowers)? More important than Einstein, Edison, George Washington, etc.?

Why? All for the reason that we call ourselves "Lutherans" and celebrate this Festival of the Lutheran Reformation.

During the dark days of the Middle Ages, the truth of God's Word was hidden away in monasteries. The church of that day was not teaching that we are saved by Jesus' death and resurrection. Instead, people were told that they needed to try and earn their way to heaven—or worse, that they had to *buy* their way to heaven. The truth of God's word was rejected, and the traditions of men put in its place.

Dr. Luther changed all that on October 31, 1517, when he nailed 95 Statements for Debate on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. He said that the Bible should be our only source of teaching, not manmade traditions. He showed that God saved us by grace alone, by faith alone. He returned the Bible into the hands of the people, and quite literally changed the world.

Today, we are not here to celebrate a man. We're here to celebrate the grace of God who reformed his Church, and brought back the pure and simple teaching that had been lost: Jesus Christ died and rose for me, so I will be in heaven forever. Period.

By Grace Alone. By Faith Alone. By Scripture Alone.

THE LUTHER SEAL

Dr. Martin Luther designed this coat of arms, or seal, to be

a summary of his theology and an expression of his faith. He explained his coat of arms with these words:



- In the center is a black cross indicative of Christ's dreadful sacrifice on the cross for every sinner who ever lived.
- The cross is in the center of a red heart, to show that faith causes love, joy and peace to grow in the human heart.
- The red heart is on a white rose (Luther's favorite flower) because white is the color of angels and blessed spirits.
- The white rose is against a blue-sky background to symbolize the Christian's hope for the coming joys of heaven.
- The seal is enclosed in a gold ring, showing that the bliss of heaven is unending.

End Times

THE CHURCH YEAR

For centuries, the Christian Church has worshiped according to the Church Year. The Church Year begins in December with the season of Advent. The first six months of the church year (December through May) follow the life of Christ from his birth until his suffering, death, and resurrection on Easter Sunday. The second six months of the church year (June through November) follow the teachings of Christ.

We are now approaching the close of the Church Year and the beginning of another. To mark the end of this year, the Church celebrates the Season of Endtimes.

Endtimes reminds us that the time is short, and our Savior is coming again soon. The Sundays in Endtimes:

1. **Last Judgment**, where we remember that Christ is coming to judge the living and the dead
 2. **Saints Triumphant**, when we remember the eternal glory enjoyed by the saints in heaven—glory prepared and waiting for us
 3. **Christ the King**, when we remember that the entire Church Year celebrates the rule of Christ over our hearts now and forever.
-

Hymn Notes

HYMN: #33, *All Praise to You, Eternal God*

“All Praise to You, Eternal God” was written by Martin Luther. The first stanza of this hymn was written in 1370 AD and was a popular pre-Reformation German Christmas hymn, one of just three hymns that the people were allowed to sing in German. With Martin Luther’s reformation, the language of worship returned to the vernacular and Luther composed many hymns. To the original stanza of this hymn, Luther added six more. First published in 1523, it became a popular expression of heartfelt Christmas joy.

HYMN: #35, *Of the Father’s Love Begotten*

This song was written by Aurelius Clemens Prudentius in 400 AD and has been used by the Christian church for 1600 years. A beautiful poem that reflects on the gift of the Father in the incarnation of Christ, the hymn today is set to a plain chant melody dating from the 1200s.

HYMN: #45, *Oh, Rejoice, All Christians, Loudly*

This beautiful hymn was originally arranged by the composer to be sung by a double choir. Today our arrangement uses the brass ensemble as one choir and our adult choir as the other. The setting is included in A. Hammerschmidt's *Musikalische Andachten*, published at Freiberg in Saxony, 1646; and is set to a tune by Hammerschmidt introduced by Hallelujah repeated twelve times. It was composed as part of a piece written by Keimann for his scholars to perform at Christmastide, 1645, and published as *Der neugeborne Jesus*, at Görlitz, 1646. Stanza iv. may refer to the truce of 1645 between Saxony and Sweden.

HYMN: #50, *Once in Royal David’s City*

Cecil Frances Alexander wrote “Once in Royal David’s City” as a way for her grandchildren to review the catechism. The original version had many stanzas which recalled the Ten Commandments. The verses that are commonly known today echo some thoughts of the Apostle’s Creed. The tune IRBY was composed by Henry J. Gauntlett in 1849 as four-part setting for children. “Once in Royal David’s City” became popular to a large extent from its use as the opening hymn for the annual service of Lessons and Carols held at Kings College in Cambridge, England. It is customary that the first stanza is sung by a member of the boys choir.

HYMN: #60, *Silent Night! Holy Night*

“Silent Night” is the undoubtedly the most beloved of all the “cradle carols,” those quieter Christmas hymns which remind one of a song a new mother might sing to her infant. It was written in 1818 by Joseph Mohr, assistant priest in St. Nikolaus Church in Oberndorf, a small village in Upper Austria. It is believed that Mohr began writing the hymn late the evening of December 23rd. He had been summoned to the home of a humble woodcutter to bless a baby that had recently been born. On his way home, he contrasted that scene with the birth of Christ in a humble stable. The thought inspired him to write the poem *Stille Nacht*, which he finished about 4am. After a few hours of sleep, Mohr rose and took the poem to the office of Franz Gruber, who was both Mohr’s best friend and the organist at St. Nikolaus, and asked him to set the poem to music for use in that evening’s Christmas Eve service. Within a few hours, Gruber had sketched in a melody and simple harmony. Since the organ at St. Nikolaus was broken, Gruber’s arrangement was for guitar. The tune quickly spread over Germany and Austria. A touring family of singers, the Raniers, sang it for the Emperor of Austria, the Czar of Russia, Queen Victoria of England, Napoleon III, and in 1839 presented it in New York

City before the Alexander Hamilton memorial. All this came from a simple poem and guitar tune that were written in about twelve hours on Christmas Eve day.

HYMN: #61, *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

Charles Wesley was the younger brother of Anglican clergyman, John Wesley. Whereas John stuck largely to theology (and is generally credited as being the founder of the Methodist movement), Charles stuck primarily to hymn writing. He penned “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”, which was first printed in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* in 1739. It quickly became extremely popular. The tune associated with “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” is titled MENDELSSOHN. It comes from the second chorus of Felix Mendelssohn’s *Festgasang an die Kunstler*, written in 1840 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Johannes Gutenberg’s invention of movable type. Mendelssohn did not think the tune appropriate for a sacred text. He wrote that it was too “soldier-like” to convey Scriptural truth. Nevertheless, in 1855 Dr. William H. Cummings adapted the tune MENDELSSOHN to fit Wesley’s text. The result is arguably the most popular Christmas hymn of all time.

HYMN: #65/66, *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

“O Little Town of Bethlehem” was written by clergyman Phillips Brooks in December 1868, inspired by a recent trip he took to the Holy Land. In his journal of that trip he wrote, “After an early dinner, we took our horses and rode into Bethlehem. It is situated on an eastern ridge of hills, a good-looking town. Before dark, we rode out to the field where they say the shepherds saw the angels.” The hymn was first printed in leaflet form and sung by Pastor Brooks’s Sunday school — six teachers and 36 children — at Holy Trinity Church in Philadelphia. A copy of the original handwritten hymn text remains in Holy Trinity’s archives to this day.

HYMN: #67, *What Child Is This?*

William Chatterton Dix was the son of a surgeon and a writer. At the age of twenty-nine he was struck with a near fatal disease and spent many months in bed, during which time William turned to writing himself. He penned a number of Christmas hymns, including “What Child Is This” and “As With Gladness Men of Old”. He wrote “What Child Is This” to fit the popular and enduring tune GREENSLEEVES. This tune originates from the early 16th century during the reign of King Henry VIII. It is mentioned in William Shakespeare’s *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

HYMN: #68, *Away in a Manger*

In 1887, James R. Murray in *Dainty Songs for Little Lads and Lasses* called “Away in a Manger” “Martin Luther’s Cradle Hymn” and claimed Luther wrote this hymn for his children in the sixteenth century. However, other musical historians have claimed that is a myth, and date the hymn closer to the late 1800’s, and possibly American in origin. The hymn has been set to many different tunes.

HYMN: #79, *How Lovely Shines the Morning Star*

Often referred to as "the queen of chorales", this hymn was written by Philip Nicolai in 1597 during the Pestilence of the Black Plague:

"One morning in great distress and tribulation in his quiet study. He rose in spirit from the distress and death which surrounded him to his Redeemer and Saviour, and while he clasped Him in ardent love there welled forth from the inmost depths of his heart this precious hymn of the Saviour's love and of the joys of Heaven. He was so entirely absorbed in this holy exaltation that he forgot all around him, even his midday meal, and allowed nothing to disturb him in his poetical labours till the hymn was completed"—three hours after midday.

It became at once a favorite in Germany, was considered indispensable at weddings, was often sung around death beds, and often sounded by city chimes. As Nicolai was closely connected with Waldeck he formed with the initial letters of his German stanzas the acrostic W. E. G. U. H. Z. W., viz. *Wilhelm Ernst Graf Und Herr Zn Waldeck*— his former pupil. Arr. Phil Magness ("O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright"—Hymns for the Contemporary Ensemble, vol 1., p. 66)

HYMN: #105, *O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

Written by Bernard of Clairvoix c. 1100 AD. Luther said of him, "If there has ever been a pious monk who feared God, it was St. Bernard, whom alone I hold in much higher esteem than all other monks and priests throughout the world." Archbishop Richard C. Trench (1807–1886) wrote, "Probably no man during his lifetime ever exercised a personal influence in Christendom equal to his; who was the stayer of popular commotions, the queller of heresies, the umpire between princes and kings, the counselor of popes, the founder, or so he may be esteemed, of an important religious order, the author of a crusade."

HYMN: #122, *Sing, My Tongue, the Glorious Battle*

This hymn by Venantius Fortunatus, the preeminent Latin poet of his day, was written sometime before 600 AD and has been sung by the Christian church during Holy Week for 1400 years.

HYMN: #166, *The Day of Resurrection*

This hymn, written by St. John of Damascus, has been sung by the Christian church for 1300 years.

HYMN: #177, *Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest*

Written in 900 AD, this Latin hymn "*Veni, Creator Spiritus*" has been praised as the greatest Latin hymn ever composed next to the "*Te Deum laudamus*." It is most often ascribed to Rhabanus Maurus, Archbishop of Mainz. The earliest use of the hymn was at Vespers during the week of Pentecost and it came to be used at Terce (9 a.m., the hour that the apostles received the Holy Spirit) in the late tenth century. The singing of this hymn in medieval services was apparently done with great dignity, accompanied by the use of incense, lights, bells, and rich vestments. The earliest mention of the hymn for the ordination service is its use in 1049AD at the Synod of Rheims. In 1307AD it was included with the English coronation rite for King Edward II and has been used continuously at English coronations ever since.

HYMN: #179, *Hail Thee, Festival Day*

This hymn was written by Venatius Fortunatus in 575 AD. This has been sung by the Christian Church at the beginning of Pentecost services for nearly 1500 years.

HYMN: #196, *Lord God, to You We All Give Praise*

This hymn was written in September of 1543 for the Festival of St. Michael and All Angels. The author is Philipp Melanchthon, one of the heroes of the Lutheran Reformation. Melanchthon was a prodigy, completing his bachelor of arts degree at age 14, and his Masters at age 17. By age 21 he was a professor of Greek at the University of Wittenberg. His classes were so popular he at times lectured to classes of 1500 students at a time. He was a faculty colleague of Dr. Martin Luther, and guided by Luther, was also the author the Augsburg Confession, a monumental contribution to Lutheranism. He is buried in the Castle Church of Wittenberg, opposite Luther's pulpit-side grave.

HYMN: #201, *A Mighty Fortress is Our God*

This battle hymn of the Reformation is still a favorite of Lutherans. Based on Psalm 46, it is as rousing today as it was when Luther urged his close friend Philip Melanchthon to sing it with him during times of sorrow and distress.

HYMN: #203, *Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word*

This hymn was written by Dr. Martin Luther in 1541 because of a grave and growing threat. Militant Islam was on the move. Seeking to conquer the West and force conversion, the armies of Islam conquered much of the Mediterranean world. They conquered right up to Vienna, the gateway to Europe. A service of prayer for the safety of Christendom was held in 1541, and Luther wrote this hymn for the boy's choir. It is prayer that God preserve his people regardless of the evil aims of this world.

HYMN: #225, *This Is the Day the Lord Has Made*

This hymn is based on the Psalm appointed for this Sunday, Psalm 118, reminding us of the privilege we have to celebrate what our Savior has done for us today and every day.

HYMN: #268, *Lamb of God, Pure and Holy*

This three-stanza version of the *Agnus Dei* by Nikolaus Decius was first published in Low German in 1539. Decius served as a Lutheran pastor in Stettin, Germany.

HYMN: #305, *From Depths of Woe I Cry to You*

This hymn was written by Dr. Martin Luther in the 16th century. He put special effort into it, and it became one of his favorites. Whenever Luther became troubled, he would gather his friends and sing this hymn. It was sung at the funeral of Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony, the friend and patron of Luther. It was also sung as Luther's body lay in state in Halle, Germany on February 20, 1546.

HYMN: #335, *O Kingly Love, that Faithfully*

The text of this hymn was written by Martin Franzmann to commemorate the 450th anniversary of the Reformation. It is an amazing piece of poetry based on the parable of the wedding feast in our Gospel lesson today. The trumpet call of God's invitation to the feast sounds clearly above the fog of this world. Come to the feast!

HYMN: #363, *Savior of the Nations, Come*

These words were written by Ambrose, one of the greatest teachers of the Christian Church. Ambrose was the bishop of Milan, Italy over 1600 years ago. At Ambrose's time there were many who denied that Jesus, our Savior, is truly God. But in his writings and in his hymns Ambrose taught the truth, that baby in the manger is God! We marvel, just like Ambrose, that God was willing to be born in Bethlehem. The awe and amazement expressed in this hymn has not been lost to us so many years later. His love will always cause us to sing praise!

THE HYMN OF THE DAY: #375, *The King of Love My Shepherd Is*

Our Psalm of the Day is Psalm 23. Today we sing “The King of Love My Shepherd Is” which is based on that Psalm.

THE HYMN OF THE DAY: #377, *Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice*

This hymn by Martin Luther was the first congregational hymn he wrote. Because of its clear and straightforward teaching of God's grace it became a popular evangelism tool in Germany. One of Luther's contemporaries wrote, "I do not doubt that through this one hymn of Luther many hundreds of Christians have been brought to the true faith."

THE HYMN OF THE DAY: #379, *Amazing Grace—How Sweet the Sound*

One of the most well-known hymns in the world, “Amazing Grace” was written by John Newton, a slave trader and sea captain who knew well both sin and grace. Brought to faith by God, John Newton left that world behind and served as a pastor for 35 years. His grave marker in an England cemetery is engraved with words he wrote for himself: *John Newton, clerk, once and Infidel and Libertine, a servant of slavers in Africa, was, by the rich Mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the Faith he had long labored to destroy.*

HYMN: #517, *Almighty Father, Strong to Save*

William Whiting wrote this hymn in 1860 for a pupil about to sail for America. It has become known as the sailor’s hymn, and its opening lines are inscribed over the chancel of the chapel at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. It was the favorite hymn of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and was sung at the signing of the Atlantic Charter in 1941, at Roosevelt’s funeral in Hyde Park, New York, in 1945, and for the funeral service of John F. Kennedy in 1963. The tune MELITA composed for this hymn takes its name from the ancient Roman name of the island of Malta where Paul was shipwrecked and in peril on the sea.

HYMN: #529, *Built on the Rock*

Nicolai Gundvig was a Lutheran pastor and educator in Denmark. He wrote this song in 1837. For 30 years the old cathedral church of our Lady in Copenhagen was in ruins. It has been bombed by the English during the Napoleonic Wars. The pile of rubble from the old church was a striking reminder that Yes, “crumbled have spires in ev’ry land”, but yet God builds his church out of us the “living stones.”

HYMN: #571, *From Greenland's Icy Mountains*

This amazingly popular hymn was composed in twenty minutes for a special Pentecost service in 1819 at Wrexham, England. The author, Reginal Heber, was urged by the vicar of Wrexham to write something for the morning's service. Since the vicar was also his father-in-law, Heber agreed, and composed Pentecost hymn that has lasted generations.

HYMN: #595, *Before the Ending of the Day*

This ancient Latin hymn has been sung at the service of Compline since the 6th century. For 1400 years God's people have prayed for God's blessing Before the Ending of the Day. The quiet, simple melody is a Benedictine plainsong melody intended to help quiet the heart and mind for a time of devotion before going to bed.

HYMN: #618, *Before the Lord We Bow*

The author of this hymn was Francis Scott Key, whose fame comes from writing the “Star Spangled Banner.” He wrote this as a hymn of thanksgiving for the Fourth of July, 1832. Our theme today centers on the growth of God’s kingdom. This hymn seems especially apt: we thank God for the earthly kingdom we inhabit, but also join in voicing our hope that this nation will send forth a glorious band of believers on the Day of Resurrection (verse 5). May God bless the growth of his kingdom in our nation and around the world!

HYMN: #702, *Prepare the Royal Highway*

This hymn reminds us that Advent is a season of preparation, as King Jesus comes to rule in our hearts and lives and leads us to his heavenly kingdom.

HYMN: #720, *Christ Jesus Lay in Death Strong Bands*

This sturdy Easter hymn was written by Martin Luther and has been sung by the Church for 500 years. The text clearly preaches victory of Christ over death. Its setting in this new melody hopes to revive its use by the modern Church. From the original: *Christ lag in Todesbanden*.

HYMN: #732, *We Are Singing*

With music based on the *South African Freedom Song*, this paraphrase of Psalm 27 underscores the confidence Christians have in God’s deliverance from every trouble.

FATHER WE PRAISE YOU

We worship our God this morning with the ancient song of praise, *Christe Sanctorum*. This hymn was written by Gregory the Great in the 6th century A.D., and it reflects the wonderful legacy that historic Christianity has left for the Church today.

THE EVENING HYMN

This ancient Latin hymn “*Te lucis ante terminium*” was written around 500 AD and has been sung in the service of Prayer at Close of Day for 1500 years. It is a quiet and peaceful hymn whose simple melody suggests the simplicity of a believer’s peace and rest with God. Note the appropriateness of the text for this Evening Hymn.

THE TE DEUM

An ancient song of the Church, its title comes from the first two words in Latin “You are God”. It was written by Ambrose on the occasion of the baptism of Augustine. This song of praise adds our voices to the choirs of angels and martyrs in glorifying our God.

YOU ARE GOD; WE PRAISE YOU *Te Deum*

The *Te Deum* is an ancient song of the Church. It has been sung by Christians for 1500 years. This Latin hymn is one of praise to the Triune God, and was written by Ambrose on the occasion of Augustine’s baptism. What a beautiful confession of our God and Savior!

THE GLORIA

This ancient song of the church gets its name from its first few words in Latin: *Gloria in Excelsis Deo!* This was the greatest song of praise ever heard on earth. An angel choir sang it in the Judean sky the night Jesus was born (Luke 2:14). This song has been sung in Christian churches for 1500 years. As Martin Luther once said, “This ancient song did not grow, nor was it made, but it came from heaven.”

GLORY BE TO GOD

This ancient song of the church gets its name from its first few words in Latin: *Gloria in Excelsis Deo!* This was the greatest song of praise ever heard on earth. An angel choir sang it in the Judean sky the night Jesus was born (Luke 2:14). This song has been sung in Christian churches for 1500 years. As Martin Luther once said, "This ancient song did not grow, nor was it made, but it came from heaven."

THE KYRIE

The word *Kyrie* is a Greek word from the phrase *Kyrie eleison* which means, "Lord, have mercy!" This is the most heartfelt cry of a believer to his Lord. It is not a cry for forgiveness, but a cry for mercy that our Lord and King hear us and help us in our necessities and trouble. Christians have been praying the *Kyrie* at Sunday worship for more than 1700 years (that's why its name is Greek, the language most commonly spoken at the time). This morning, may it also be our heartfelt cry to our Lord and King.

THE VENITE

The *Venite* (which means "come" in Latin) is an ancient song of the Church. Christians have been singing Psalm 95 to each other in this way for centuries of worship.

GATHERING RITE

Normally, no hymn of praise is sung during Advent and Lent. This practice accentuates the solemn and penitential nature of these seasons. This Advent the *Gloria* is replaced by the gathering rites for the season.

HYMN: *In dulci jubilo*

In dulco jubilo, Now sing we, now rejoice;
Now raise to heav'n our voice;
While such joy is streaming, he in poor manger lies; Yet not
so brightly beaming, matris in gremio. Alpha es et O.

*In sweet joy, Now sing we, now rejoice;
Now raise to heav'n our voice;
While such joy is streaming, he in poor manger lies; Yet not so brightly
beaming, in his mother's lap. You are the Alpha and the Omega, the
beginning and the end.*

This is a very ancient song, sung by the Christian church for more than 700 years. It is a macaronic, or written in more than one language, by Heinrich Suso (d. 1366). The tune was composed by Michael Praetorius, the great Lutheran court composer in Lüneburg, Germany in 1604.

HYMN: *Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring* by J.S. Bach

This extremely popular piece of music was written by one of the greatest composers of all time, Johann Sebastian Bach. Bach was a confessional Lutheran living in German during the 1700s. Most of his compositions were pieces written for the church at which he served.

Composed originally in 1716 in Weimar, Cantata 147 was revised by Bach during his Leipzig years, and premiered in an expanded version in 1723 for the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is the feast which commemorates the visitation of the archangel Gabriel to the young, betrothed but as yet unwed Mary to announce that she would become the Mother of God.

HYMN: *Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming*

The tune for tonight was composed by Michael Praetorius, the great Lutheran court composer in Lüneburg, Germany in 1604.

HYMN: *The Magnificat*

The Magnificat is the song that the virgin Mary sang in response to Gabriel's announcement that she was to be the mother of the Savior. This song has been sung by the Christian Church since at least 500 A.D. It's name comes from the first words of the song in Latin, "Magnificat anima mea Dominum" which means "My soul glorifies the Lord."

HYMN: *Magnificat*

Mary's Song to God is called the *Magnificat*. The title comes from the first line of the song in Latin: *Magnificat anima mea*—"My soul magnifies the Lord."

The *Magnificat* has been used in evening services by the Christian Church since at least 500A.D.

Martin Luther once wrote:

"Now, in all of Scripture I do not know anything that serves such a purpose so well as this sacred hymn of the most blessed Mother of God, which ought indeed to be learned and kept in mind by all who would rule well and be helpful lords. In it she sings sweetly about the fear of God, what sort of Lord he is, and especially what his dealings are with those of low and high degree. Let someone else listen to his love singing a worldly ditty; this pure virgin well deserves to be heard by prince and lord, as she sings him her sacred, chaste, and salutary song. It is a fine custom, too, that this canticle is sung in all churches daily at vespers (the evening service), and in special and appropriate settings that set it apart."

HYMN: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*

Text by Aurelius Clemens Prudentius, 348 AD

Tune *Divinum Ministerium*, 1300 AD

This hymn has been sung by the church for nearly 1700 years. For good reason it has stood the test of time. The powerful words speak of Christ's eternal nature and his earthly incarnation. The tune connotes the majesty and awe owed this manifestation of the Father's love, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

HYMN: *This One Thing I Ask of the Lord*

by Charles McCartha - Hope Publishing Company

This setting of Psalm 27 uses the old English melody "Scarborough Fair." The melody was written during the middle ages and had many ballads set to its tune. The most frequent ballad sung to this tune by the bards were love stories where a person asks something of their beloved. It's an appropriate expression of the one thing we ask of the LORD, our beloved, that we may dwell in his house all the days of our life (Psalm 27:4)

HYMN: *Panis Angelicus*

Panis Angelicus was written by Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274 AD), one of the great teachers of the medieval Church. The text is a hymn of praise to Christ, the Bread of Life, who gives his flesh to us in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

HYMN: *Festival Gathering*

Come, All You People/UYAI MOSE. Text: Alexander Gondo © 1994, Wild Goose Resource Group, Iona Community, GIA Publications, Inc. Arrangement: Tony Alonso © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

We gather together to sing praises to the Lord. This Gathering Song comes from the Christian community in Zimbabwe, Africa. It's a wonderful reminder that the Holy Christian Church crosses language and culture, binding all believers together by faith in Jesus Christ. Come and worship the Lord!

Worship Notes

COMMUNION SERVICE NOTES

Today's service includes a celebration of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. For personal preparation, consider using page 156 in the front of the hymnal.

MORNING PRAISE

"Morning Praise" is based on the historic service called "Matins." Joined to Christ, our risen Lord, we glorify God as we rise to activities of this new day.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Prayer of the Day (listed on first page) has been prayed in Christian churches for 1600 years. With its references to prayer, conscience, and the spirit of humility, it well suits our sermon text for today.

PASCHAL CANDLE

The Paschal Candle is the large candle in our chancel. The Paschal Candle is lighted every Easter Vigil to symbolize that Christ is alive and lives among his people. It is then lighted for every service during the 40 day period that follows Easter as we celebrate the resurrection, the greatest of God's miracles and mercies.

At the Festival of the Ascension the Paschal Candle is carried from the chancel to symbolize that Jesus did not remain with his Church in bodily form but returned to his heavenly Father's right hand in glory. The recession of the Paschal Candle does not imply that Jesus is no longer present among us, for he promised, "Where two or three come together in my name, there am I among them" (Matthew 18:20). Wherever his Word and Sacraments are, there Jesus is truly present. The recession of the Paschal candle helps us to remember that Jesus does not himself carry the gospel in Word and Sacraments to the world, but has appointed us to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:20). With Jesus' power and presence, we are indeed witnesses of grace.

PASCHAL CANDLE – FOR FUNERAL

The Paschal Candle is a symbol of the Resurrection. A new candle is brought in and dated during the Easter Vigil each year. It is lit three times during the year: during the Easter season, at baptisms, and at funerals. The Apostle Paul explains the extraordinary connection between these three events in Romans 6:

"Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his."

Name was baptized and given new life in Christ, **He/She** is now united with his risen Lord in the glories of Paradise. The candle reminds us that because Christ lives forever, so does our friend.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

For 500 years, it has been the widespread custom of the Lutheran Church to ring the church bell three times during the Lord's Prayer. Rung at the beginning, middle and end of the prayer, it allowed even the sick and absent across the countryside to join the Church in praying the "Our Father."

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

"In the evening when you go to bed, make the sign of the holy cross and say, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' " (*The Small Catechism*)

AFFIRMATION OF HOLY BAPTISM

Today have a public recognition of a private baptism. *(Child's Name)* was baptized in *(Name of Place)*, but today *his/her* parents have brought *him/her* before the congregation of God that we might recognize *his/her* baptism, pray for *him/her*, and commit ourselves to *him/her* ongoing instruction and preservation in the faith. As such, no water will be applied to *him/her*, but only the question, "Was *he/she* baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit?"

COMPLINE

The root of the word "complete" can be heard in the name of this service: Compline. When the day is complete, this is the final service before one retires for the night. The congregation gathers in silence. Preservice music is omitted, and the lighting is subdued. This is a time for prayer and meditation. The believer finds peace in God's forgiveness and security under the shadow of his wings.

Special Worship Services

CONFIRMATION

The word “confirmation” means “strengthening.” Confirmation classes comprise a two year period of instruction in the Christian faith for our seventh and eighth grade children. Jesus commanded his Church to “**teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.**” The purpose of confirmation class is to strengthen the faith of the children through instruction in the Word of God, and to prepare them to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

A REVIEW OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

In 1529 Dr. Martin Luther published the small catechism. The catechism is a summary of the basic teachings of the Christian faith, organized under the headings in the service folder. Like the generations of young men and women before them, Grant and Lauren have studied these truths and have made them their own. We will now join them in publicly proclaiming these truths.

MISSION FESTIVAL

Today we celebrate the great mission God has given his Church: to preach the good news of salvation to all the world.

It is our special privilege this morning to welcome Pastor and Mrs. Paul Seager. Pastor Seager and his wife Lara Beth have been called by our district mission board to start a new church in McDonough, Georgia.

This new church will be a mission of our national church body, the WELS.

The Church wears the color red on days when the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized. Today, we remember that it was the Spirit who began his good work in us, and it will be the Spirit who will give us the strength to carry out the mission he put before us.

CHURCH FOUNDING SERVICE NOTES:

Five years ago, our national church body officially recognized the founding of Faith Ev. Lutheran Congregation. After a number of years of exploratory work, Faith became a mission church of the WELS on Oct 7, 2001.

Today we celebrate the work that God has done among us these past five years, and we pray that he would give us the strength to finish the work he placed before us.

The Church wears the color red on days when the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized. Today, we remember that it was the Spirit who began his good work in us, and it will be the Spirit who will give us the strength to finish it.

To God Alone the Glory!

THE 475TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PRESENTATION OF THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

On June 25, 1530, the Lutheran Church was born when the Augsburg Confession was presented to Emperor Charles V. A "confession" is a statement of belief. Augsburg was the city where it happened.

ABOUT THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

All members of our national church body, the WELS-congregations, pastors, teachers, and other rostered church workers--subscribe to and acknowledge the Book of Concord "to be a correct interpretation of the Holy Scriptures." Thus, the Lutheran Confessions declare before all the world what we believe, teach, and confess to be the true and universal teachings of the Christian Church.

The Augsburg Confession was presented to Emperor Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire on Saturday, June 25, 1530, in Augsburg, Germany. Here the emperor had convened a "diet," or general assembly, of representatives of church and state to consider the Lutheran movement. In the Bishop's Palace, where Charles V was lodged, the Confession was read in German by Chancellor Dr. Christian Beyer. This fearless Lutheran layman read the Augsburg Confession so distinctly and loudly that also those who were gathered in the spacious courtyard of the palace could understand every word.

It was a large and august body which here heard a clear summary of what the Lutherans believed and confessed as the truth of God's Word. There were present all the electors, princes, bishops, representatives of the free cities, and foreign ambassadors connected with the empire. After the reading of the Augsburg Confession, the document was handed to the emperor in both a German and a Latin version.

WHAT THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION TEACHES

The Augsburg Confession stresses the doctrine of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as the center of the Christian Faith. It gathers around this basic teaching of the Bible all other doctrines of the Christian Faith. In this respect, the Augsburg Confession is unique among Christian Confessions. It witnesses everywhere the glorious Christ, who died for us and rose again and who alone is the Savior of all men.

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION, PATTERN OF OTHER CHURCH CONFESSIONS

Because the Augsburg Confession is so excellent a presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and its joyous message of free and full salvation for all men, its influence on Protestantism has been tremendous. The Augsburg Confession is still the outstanding Evangelical Confession, and it is regarded by all Lutherans as a creed that is truly biblical.
